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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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9/17/76

Dear Mr. Burton:

This is a followup to the conversation Mr. John Kyl, Assistant Secretary, Congressional and Legislative Affairs, of this Department had with you yesterday on the need for quick action with respect to the rehabilitation and resettlement proposal for Eniwetok Atoll.

You will recall that the Subcommittee held hearings on an authorization proposal on October 1, 1974, and reported it favorably to the full Committee. The Senate already had passed the authorization as S. 3912 on September 25, 1974. Final action was withheld pending approval by Congress for the funding of the cleanup work which had been made the responsibility of the Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense received Congressional approval for the cleanup funding in July 1976 and on July 16, 1976, the President signed H.R. 14235, Military Construction Appropriation, which became P.L. 94-367. This bill contains the Eniwetok cleanup appropriation. The Defense Nuclear Agency (DOD) now has launched the first phase of the cleanup work.

From the onset of the Eniwetok Project, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense have worked closely together in planning for the Cleanup and Rehabilitation Programs. Although the Office of Management and Budget split the responsibility for these two aspects, it has always been acknowledged that these two programs must be closely inter-related at all times. The Master Plan for the rehabilitation work was designed to mesh into the first phase of the cleanup work in order to utilize to the maximum the logistic and support operations which DOD must mount to carry out the cleanup operation. The DOD plan calls for full operation of cleanup activities by 1 May 1977 and a windup of all cleanup activities by 1 May 1979.

Unless DOI/TIPI Rehabilitation Project funding is able to mesh with the May 1977 date, the rehabilitation work will fall drastically behind. Rehabilitation costs, currently estimated at \$12.4 million, are predicated on an initial increment of \$4 million being available and committed by May 1977. If this initial increment is not available, the DOI/TIPI Rehabilitation Project cannot ride "piggy-back" on DOD transportation nor avail itself to the maximum of logistic activities which DOD must maintain for cleanup activities.

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If the Department of the Interior cannot mesh its program with that of the Department of Defense, it is estimated that the current \$12.4 million rehabilitation cost estimate would have to be raised by \$5.2 million.

Equally important is the fact that if the major phases of the DOI/TTPI rehabilitation activities are not completed by May 1979, DOI/TTPI will be faced at that time with full support of a major "base" activity at Eniwetok until the rehabilitation project is completed. This alone could add up to an additional \$1.5 million in operation costs a year.

It should be noted also that DOI/TTPI have revised the 1974 Master Plan for Eniwetok in such a way so as to accomplish the same end results in 1977 without an appreciable cost increase.

We hope that Congress will be able to expedite action on the rehabilitation and resettlement funding in order that the Department will be able to move forward quickly in carrying out its part of the commitment made to the people of Eniwetok.

Sincerely yours,

Fred M. Zedler
Director of Territorial Affairs

Hon. Phillip Burton, Chairman
Subcommittee on Territorial and
Insular Affairs
Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

NOTE: Similar letters sent to:
Chairman Yates, SubCom on Interior
Comm on Appropriations
Hon. Don Clausen, SubCom on Terr &
Insular Affairs, Comm on Int & Ins Affs
Senator Mark O. Hatfield
Senator J. Bennett Johnston